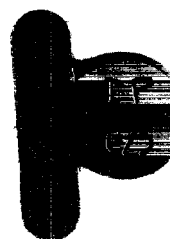


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Project: IP-175

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF REPORTS AND ESTIMATES
Project Initiation Memorandum

Date: 17 October 1950

To: D/La

From: Publications Division, Projects Planning

Subject: El Partido del Pueblo, Panama

Statement of Project

25X1A

Origin: Internal (K-9438) 3483

Problem: To provide a current assessment of the Partido del Pueblo in Panama

Scope: As indicated in attached memo

Graphics (if any):

Form: Memo

Draft due in D/Pub: 20 October 1950, or earlier

Responsible Division: D/La

Internal Coordination: As needed

Departmental responsibilities: None

Classification to be no higher than: SECRET

Recommended Dissemination: Requester only

AD/ONE
OPC
D/La

~~SECRET~~

Project: 10-175

OFFICE OF REPORTS AND ESTIMATES

Project Initiation Memorandum

Date: 17 Oct 50

To: D/LA

From: Publications Division, Projects Planning

Subject: El Partido del Pueblo, Panama

Statement of Project

Origin: Internal (K-3438)

Problem: To provide a current assessment of the Partido del Pueblo,
in Panama.

Scope: As indicated in attached memo

Graphics (if any):

Form: Memo

Draft due in D/Pub: 20 Oct. 50 or earlier

Dissemination deadline
(if any):

Responsible Division: D/LA

Internal Coordination: not needed

Departmental responsibilities: none

Classification to be no higher than: Secret

Recommended Dissemination: Requestor only

AD/ORE
OPC
D/LA

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1. Partido del Pueblo, Panama
2. Panama - Pol. & govt.

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13 October 1950

MEMORANDUM FOR: CHIEF, D/FUB, ORE
ATTENTION : [REDACTED] 25X1A
SUBJECT : PARTIDO DEL PUEBLO in Panama
REFERENCE : Case K-3438

1. This office requests a current assessment of the subject organization, to include the following:

- a. Infiltration in labor unions
- b. Membership - approximate strength and from which elements drawn
- c. Leadership - names, description. Current position of Celso Solano
- d. Relations with other political parties in Panama
- e. Evidence of contact with Communist elements in other countries
- f. Financial position
- g. Attitude of Panamanian government toward PARTIDO DEL PUEBLO
- h. Capabilities for sabotage, espionage in Canal Zone
- i. Any other pertinent information that would assist in determining PARTIDO DEL PUEBLO's intentions and capabilities

2. A deadline of 18 October 1950 has been established for receipt of this information.

3. Any questions concerning the above request may be referred to [REDACTED] on extension 3264. 25X1A

[REDACTED] 25X1A

Chief, Intelligence Support Branch

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ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

INSTRUCTIONS: Officer designations should be used in the "TO" column. Under each comment a line should be drawn across sheet and each comment numbered to correspond with the number in the "TO" column. Each officer should initial (check mark insufficient) before further routing. This Routing and Record Sheet should be returned to Registry.

FROM: I/IS	NO. 33472
	DATE 13 October 1950

TO	ROOM NO.	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS
		REC'D	FWD'D		
1. Chief, D/Pub, ORE ATTN: [REDACTED]	25X1A				1P-175
2.					
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TRANSMITTAL SLIP		
DATE		
TO: <i>W/ Pub.</i>		
BUILDING	ROOM NO.	
REMARKS:		
FROM: INFO. CONTROL DIVISION/ORI		
BUILDING	ROOM NO.	EXTENSION

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B/Pub (Attn: Projects Planning)

30 October 1950

Chief, D/LA

IP-175, El Partido del Pueblo, Panama

REFERENCE: (a) D/Pub memo, El Partido del Pueblo, Panama, dated 17 October 1950
 (b) OPC memo to D/Pub, El Partido del Pueblo, Panama, dated 13 October 1950

In compliance with Reference (a) this paper provides a current assessment of the Partido del Pueblo in Panama. Subject headings correspond to those of Reference (b). In this study the problem of capabilities for sabotage and espionage (Section b, below) is considered in its broader aspects. D/LA has no information on vulnerability to sabotage or espionage of the Canal Zone, which is outside CIA's designated areas of interest.

a. Infiltration in labor unions.

(1) Republic of Panama.

Infiltration by members of the Partido del Pueblo (PdP) into labor unions has been carried on through the Communist-dominated labor federation (Federación Sindical Trabajadores de la República de Panama (FSTRP). At the peak of its power two or three years ago this federation included 18 independent unions and claimed 20,000 members. It is now relatively small (membership not known), weak, and disorganized but nevertheless is still the strongest labor federation in Panama and can be used effectively for Communist propaganda and agitation. The chief member unions of the FSTRP are those of the dock workers; tailors and dress makers; bricklayers; chauffeurs, taxi drivers, etc.; machinists and metallurgists; and a few local agricultural unions. In the past the Communists have also controlled the maritime union, but the extent of Communist influence in the union at present is not known. There is also some question as to the extent of Communist influence over portions of the transportation unions.

The Communists also have achieved some influence over the non-Communist labor federation Union General Trabajadores (UGT).

(2) Canal Zone.

Infiltration by Panamanian Communists into labor activities in the Canal Zone are at present carried on through the United Canal Workers. This is the current name of the former Local 713, which was affiliated with the Communist-dominated United Public Workers of the CIO until early this year. The Local now has 500 members or less and is unimportant in Canal Zone labor activities. Local 713 had 17,000 members at the peak of its power two or three years ago.

b. Membership

The Partido del Pueblo had 837 registered members as of 10 March 1950. As many as fifty percent of these are reportedly not in fact Communists

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or fellow-travellers but are political opportunists, chauvinists, anti-US sympathizers, or persons whose party registrations have been obtained by fraud. In addition to the open membership of the party, there are about 816 native or foreign Communists or fellow-travellers who are not affiliated with the PdP. Approximately 75 percent of these are Panamanian citizens. PdP membership is chiefly drawn from labor unions, professors, teachers, and intellectuals; and youth (student) groups. The party is not a self-disciplined group but is very fluid in character, members becoming active or inactive as the need strikes them. Members are frequently expelled in a spurt of ideological rigidity but nevertheless continue to be active in the formulation of party policy and tactics.

c. Leadership of Partido del Pueblo, Panama.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>IDENTITY</u>
<u>Cristóbal L. Segundo</u>	PdP president
<u>Hugo Victor</u>	PdP secretary general
<u>Celso Solano</u>	PdP former secretary general, now expelled from party
<u>Carlos A. Cajal</u>	Lawyer, PdP leader, student leader
<u>Domingo Barria</u> (or Barrio)	FSTRP secretary general
<u>Juan Nieto</u>	FSTRP secretary of organization
<u>Cesar de Leon</u> (or de Leni)	Permanent Peace Committee secretary general and university professor
<u>Abel Candanedo</u>	A leader in Chiriqui province
<u>Diogenes de la Rosa</u>	Professor at National Institute
<u>Demetrio Porras</u>	Socialist politician
<u>Carlos del Cid</u>	Chief of Communist cell at the University
<u>Carlos Rodriguez</u>	PdP treasurer
<u>Ruben Diario Souza Batista</u> (or Ruben Sousa)	PdP secretary of organization
<u>Xenia Molina</u>	Former PdP treasurer, fanatic

Cristobal L. Segundo, party president, is an alternate Supreme Court judge. He was on the bench for a couple of months last spring as a substitute for a non-Communist judge who was in poor health and whose term of office was to expire in October 1950. A new full-time, non-Communist judge has now been appointed, but as far as is known Segundo is still the alternate.

Hugo Victor, secretary general, is a native Panamanian negro, professor at the Institute or National University, and was Secretary of Propaganda for the party until the removal of Celso Solano from the secretaryship. Victor is rabidly anti-US and is described as an ideological Communist and a fanatic. He continually tries to eliminate party members who seek personal gain or who weaken the party's militant structure.

Celso Solano, former secretary general, is now suspended from the party. He is an intellectual and has wide contacts in the upper classes as well as other social classes in Panama. No reports have been received concerning Solano's activities since he was removed from office and suspended from party activities in August 1950. It is believed he is likely to remain loyal

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El Partido del Pueblo Release 1999/09/21 : CIA-RDP79T01049A000200090005-2 October 1950

to the Communist cause in Panama and working in one manner or another for it. During the second quarter of 1950 there were rumors of a split within the Partido del Pueblo between the "intellectual" faction headed by Solano with the more fanatical faction of Carlos Cajal. The extent to which a difference of opinion regarding party policy may have been responsible for Solano's removal from office is not known at this time.

Carlos A. Cajal, a leading party member in Panama City, is a lawyer and the person who brought suit to have the Supreme Court declare unconstitutional the government's resolution of 29 April 1950 outlawing the Partido del Pueblo and all Communist activities in Panama. He is reportedly the leader of the group that was opposed to the "intellectual" faction of Celso Solano. Cajal reportedly favors a stronger and more active Marxist party than Solano favored and believes that the party should hew completely to the Moscow line. The Cajal group is said to be supported by the Communist students, and Cajal is connected with the Communist cell at the National University, "Active Universitario".

Domingo Barria (or Barrio), secretary general of Communist labor federation FSTRP (Federación Sindical Trabajadores de la República de Panama), is one of the most influential and active Communists in Panama because of his leadership of the federation.

Abel Candanedo is sometimes called the "undercover leader" of the party. His exact status regarding Communism and the Communist party is not known. He is president of the Socialist group in Chiriqui province, the "Chiriqui en Marcha", which is a newly organized Communist-front group carrying on "peace" activities since spring of 1950. He has been active since November 1949 in rejuvenating the Socialist Party in Chiriqui but is also mentioned as a Communist leader in Chiriqui province.

Diogenes de la Rosa, according to the police, is the "most dangerous leftist in Panama". His exact status regarding Communism is not known, but at one time he was a member of the Communist party, and he apparently is still associated with Communist activities. However, he may call himself a Socialist, since he was a Socialist deputy to the National Assembly a few years ago. During World War II, he was pro-US and in his news column he has supported UN activities in Korea, but he has been very anti-US many times in recent years. He is a professor of sociology and economics at the National Institute.

Demetrio Porras, Socialist candidate for the presidency in 1948, one of the earliest Marxists in Panama, left the Communist party in 1932, when he took much of the rank and file with him and organized the Socialist party. In the early days of the Socialist party, Porras and a proven Soviet-paid propaganda agent worked together, and in 1946 a "usually reliable source" identified Porras as "the Soviet paymaster of Communist party leaders in Panama". He is not openly identified as a member of the PdP but in recent months has been carrying on agitation designed to discredit the US.

d. Relations with other political parties.

The Partido del Pueblo has no electoral alliances with other parties but has other types of relations with various political factions.

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El Partido del Pueblo, Panama 4 October 1950

Since the PdP lacks the 7500 members required by law in order that any party may be permitted to present slates of candidates for elections, it is too small to be of interest to other parties who are seeking votes. However, other political factions find it worthwhile to cooperate directly or indirectly with the Communists on various types of agitation at which the Communists are effective. The Communists at times exert considerable influence in Panama because of their influence with labor and student groups and their consequent capacity to help foment political instability and/or to appeal to Panamanian nationalism by agitation against the US. Various other political factions engage in similar activities and do not hesitate to cooperate directly or indirectly with the Communists. This is true, for example, of the Liberals who oppose the present administration, the ultra-nationalists, and the Socialists. The Socialists, who are unimportant as a party because they are too small to be legally recognized, have little political or labor influence. They are former Communists and cooperate with the PdP in some activities. The Liberals in Chiriqui province recently refused an offer of cooperation made by the PdP, but they have cooperated with the Communists in the past. Moreover, the PdP is following a party line very similar to that of the Liberals on local issues at present and may be able to use them as a cover for propaganda or agitation in coming months. Ultra-nationalists who are not Communists, such as Harmodio Arias, have indirectly cooperated with the PdP at times when the aims of the nationalists have coincided with those of the Communists. Powerful student groups are characteristically used in political maneuvers by both the Communists and fellow-travellers and by the ultra-nationalists.

e. Evidence of contacts with Communist elements in other countries.

No evidence has been received of direct contacts with or instructions from the USSR. There have been reported contacts with Communist elements abroad, particularly in Cuba and Mexico. It is definitely known that the Panamanian Communists and fellow-travellers receive propaganda from abroad, make trips abroad, receive foreign visitors in Panama, and participate in international activities, particularly in labor, student, and peace activities. The Communist-dominated FSTRP is affiliated with the CTAL and WFTU. Communist students in Panama have contacts at times with the International Union of Students (IUS). The Panamanian peace program received its directives from abroad, according to Celso Solano; and a Panamanian delegation attended the 1949 peace congress in Mexico City. Panamanian leftists and Communists are preliminary officers in the new organization "Central American Association of Writers and Artists" which appears to be a Communist-front group and has affiliates in Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador.

f. Financial position.

The PdP has been in a weak financial position during the past year. This seems to be the usual state of the party. From time to time there are reports to the effect that financial support is received from abroad, and some may have been received from time to time; however, the unprosperous financial state of many of the leaders, plus the party's continual financial difficulties, indicate little financial support from abroad.

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El Partido del Pueblo 1955/09/21 : CIA-RDP79T01049A000200090005-2 30 October 1950

g. Attitude of the Panamanian government toward the PdP.

The attitude of the present government is theoretically anti-Communist. On 29 April 1950 the cabinet issued a resolution outlawing the PdP and prohibiting all propaganda, activity, or agitation of a Communist character; the Supreme Court recently upheld the constitutionality of this resolution. In June 1950 the cabinet issued a decree prohibiting Communists or fellow-travellers from holding public office or working in autonomous public institutions such as Panama University. The Permanent Legislative Commission, a sub-body of the National Assembly, agreed that the National Assembly shall consider a bill legalizing the latter decree during the current session (autumn 1950). To implement these anti-Communist measures in the meantime, the police raided the headquarters of the PdP and of the FSTRP and seized documents and party records. In addition the Superior Court ordered an investigation of the FSTRP in order to determine the extent of Communist domination of that labor federation and the ways in which the FSTRP may be violating the country's Labor Code. However, there have been no recent moves by the president to enforce anti-Communist measures.

The president seems to have been deterred, through political expediency, from implementing anti-Communist measures, for the Communists have enough influence on student groups and labor to cause dangerous strikes, if the government dismisses Communists or fellow-travellers from their positions in educational institutions and other public positions. His administration is not strongly entrenched in power, political tension is continuous, and serious strikes or other agitation by the Communists or any other group could possibly strengthen non-Communist opponents of Arias sufficiently to oust him from power.

h. Capabilities for sabotage, espionage in Canal Zone.

While sabotage in the Republic of Panama is not considered a problem, covert attempts to sabotage Panama Canal Zone installations from the Republic of Panama are considered a distinct possibility because Panamanian police are not capable of discovering and suppressing Communists in charge of sabotage, espionage, and other covert activities, nor of preventing alien Communists from filtering into Panama at this time. It is thought that Communists in charge of sabotage and other covert activities probably have few contacts with the known Communists in Panama, do not work through the usual Communist organizations, and are largely unknown to the police. There is no reason to think that President Arias' anti-Communist activities of recent months, which the police are the most important factor in executing, have really touched covert Communist activities in Panama. Moreover, the police are themselves inadequately trained, badly organized, and deeply involved in local politics. They can, therefore, make practically no contribution to the protection of the Canal. There has been no recent improvement in the low efficiency and capability of the national police and secret police, nor in their ability to prevent the use of Panamanian territory as a base of Communist sabotage operations.

i. Other pertinent information.

The numerically small Partido del Pueblo has an influence that is much greater than the membership of the party would seem to indicate.

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El Partido del Pueblo, Panama

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Factors benefitting the Communists are: (1) Communist influence over labor and student groups and their ability to use these for agitation and propaganda purposes both for local political purposes and for fomenting anti-US feeling, and (2) inability of the Panamanian police to prevent Communist use of Panamanian territory as a base for sabotage or espionage operations. Nevertheless, Communist capabilities for legal action are very limited. They do not significantly influence the Panamanian voters; they are too small numerically either to win elections themselves or to win control over any administration. Moreover, there is no likelihood that the Panamanian Communist party and its several "front" organizations will be sufficiently strong within the foreseeable future to modify the government's pro-US foreign policy in the US-USSR rivalry.

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